DILLON ANDERSON OF TEXAS

The Keeper of the Nation's Secrets

Suppose the Chinese Communists attack Quemoy and Matsu . . . Suppose war breaks out in the Middle East . . . Suppose fighting starts up again in Indo-China . . .

What will the U.S. do?

Almost every Thursday at 10 a.m., a small group of men gather in the Cabinet Room of the White House to discuss just such questions as these with President Eisenhower—and to come up with answers. They are the members of the National Security Council, the nation's top-secret planning agency for the cold war.

The man who directs the operations of this group for the President has one of the most important jobs in the government. Yet few newspaper readers in this country would even recognize his name. In the following Special Report, Peter Wyden of NEWSWEEK's Washington bureau, tells the story of the man and the job:

A LITTLE more than a year ago, President Eisenhower had to fill a vacancy on the White House staff. An aide brought him a list of six names. Each of the six men had been hand-picked for ability to master the job, but the President's forefinger moved swiftly to one name and remained there.

"Get me that man," Mr. Eisenhower said. "I'd rather have him for the job than any other man in America."

The man was Dillon Anderson, 49, a quietly intense, bespectacled Houston, Texas, corporation lawyer who is also a successful author of light fiction. The President knew him well. During the 1952 campaign Anderson worked closely—but behind the scenes—with candidate Eisenhower. Later the President tabbed him as a consultant to the National Security Council. Now he wanted him on the team full time. The job: Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

The holder of this obscure title probably knows more top secrets than any man except the President. Better than anyone else, he knows the President's current thinking on the incredibly complex problems that affect the security of the U.S. Anderson does not make policy. If anything, his job is tougher: He receives the views of the policymakers and must then (1) try to pound out agreement between them or (2) isolate the areas of disagreement. ("Let's not sweep it under the rug.")

"He tests whether the thoughts presented to the President have really been looked at and been thought through from all angles," an associate explains.

To perform this assignment, Anderson, a wiry 6-footer, switches roles with the agility of a high jumper, which he was in college (his record, 6 feet 3¾ inches):

▶At the three-times-a-week sessions of the NSC's planning board, he is the chairman and arbitrator who decides at what stage a problem should be bucked to the council.

▶Before NSC meetings, Anderson draws up the agenda and briefs the President. He answers Mr. Eisenhower's many detailed questions and, if the answers are not in his black, 4- to 6-inches-thick loose-leaf notebook with tab index, he gets them in a hurry. Often, he becomes a sounding board as the President walks about his desk, peers out the window, and "thinks out loud" on upcoming issues.

▶At council meetings, he is the man who introduces each subject.

▶After the meetings, he writes the "records of action." No votes are taken in NSC sessions and no transcripts are made. So the task is delicate. "Sometimes the President just indicates his reactions as the vigorous discussion progresses," Anderson says. "I've got to reflect the exact line of his ruling." Only after the President approves the "record of action" (sometimes he edits it in ink) does it become United States policy.

▶Anderson also directs the 28-man NSC staff which is quietly secluded behind barricades on the third floor of the Executive Office Building; sits in on weekly meetings of the Operations Coordinating Board (chairman: Under Secretary of State Herbert Hoover Jr.), which checks on how the council's decisions are being carried out; and frequently he attends Cabinet meetings.

A day in Anderson's six-and-a-half-day week (he usually takes Sunday afternoon off) begins at 7 a.m. in the rented Georgetown Colonial house where he lives with five telephones, his wife Lena, and one school-age daughter. Another daughter is married, a third is away at school. By 7 a.m. he has spent at least eight hours asleep (he prefers ten hours) plus one hour half-awake in bed. During that hour he does some of his most productive thinking.

Anderson calls himself an Independent Democrat, but run-of-party Democrats would find little to applaud in his views. His personal habits are equally conservative. His dark gray suits look about alike and his one loud sports shirt was a gift.

Walk to Work: In poor weather, he is off to his office at 8 a.m. in a government limousine. Otherwise, he is in front of the door at 8:05 sharp when Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks, who lives a few blocks up the street, can be counted

Newsweek Kent

Anderson carries a book of knowledge